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"THE CCC FIGHTS EROSION"

Broadcast No. 15 in a series  
of discussions of soil con-  
servation in the Ohio Valley.

WLW, Cincinnati

Aug. 6, 1938      6 - 6:15 p.m.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
Dayton, Ohio



SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

MUSIC: Fading...

ANNOUNCER

On December 10, 1799, the shadow of death hovered over a peaceful plantation bordering the beautiful Potomac River. General George Washington neared the end of a lifetime of service to his people. Though his days approached a close, he still thought of these who would remain, the men who would till the soil he left behind. He sent for his farm overseer...

ATTENDANT (Whispering)

Stay not long, and be very quiet. The General is tired.

ANDERSON

I understand.

SOUND: Door opens and closes gently.

ANDERSON

You -- you sent for me, General Washington?

WASHINGTON

Ah! Anderson. Yes, do have a chair.

ANDERSON

Thank you, sir, kindly.

WASHINGTON

A bit closer, if you please.

SOUND: Chair, sliding on floor.

WASHINGTON

That's better. Here, Anderson, are some final instructions and a plan of operation for the three farms. I wrote them out for you because, well, I may not long be with you.



ANDERSON

Oh, but General--why, you'll be up in no time, sir.

WASHINGTON

You look them over, just the same. And pay particular note to what I wrote about the Muddy Hole farm.

ANDERSON

...where...oh, yes, here it is. "The washed and gullied parts of it ought to be leveled and smoothed, and as far as it can be accomplished, covered with litter, straw, weeds, corn stalks, or any other kind of vegetable rubbish, to prevent the earth from gullying."

WASHINGTON

And you will observe that the same applies for the River farm. You shall take the eroded lands out of cultivation. Continue your crop rotations, to build up the soil into a fine state of fertility and richness.

ANDERSON

And the Union farm, General?

WASHINGTON

The second fields needs much care, Anderson. It is an indifferent field, washed in some places, gullied in others, and rich in none. Those gullies must be prevented from getting worse.

MUSIC: Fading...





ANNOUNCER

Four days later, a nation mourned as George Washington passed away. The first president left behind a pattern for conservation farming, but it was not until recent years that conservation of the nation's basic resources went forward on a country-wide scale, with the inception of the Civilian Conservation Corps. To the George Washington National Forest, named for a pioneer conservationist, came the first group of enrollees in April, 1933...

SOUND: Heavy rain, trucks grinding and splashing thru mud, men talking, singing, and shouting...

BILL

Wow! Watch it come down! Scoot over this way, fellow.

EDDIE

Nix on that stuff! I've found a dry spot up next this cabin.

BILL

Don't kid me! There ain't no dry spots. And is it dark!

Hey! Are we goin' on a detour again? The old Shenandoah sure must be up.

EDDIE

Yeah, lots of the bridges are pretty weak. Oh, me. Wish I was back in Newark.

BILL

Me, too. Got a cigaret?

EDDIE

Haven't had a cigaret in weeks. But you just try to light one in this rain. Oh, oh, here we are, I think.

SOUND: Trucks grinding to halt.



LIEUTENANT

All right, pile out everybody! Now to put up the tents!

Everybody this way, and watch your step, it's slippery!

CHORUS: Groans, shouts, etc.

MUSIC: Fading...

ANNOUNCER

But the following day the sun came out, and the morale of the men mounted with the temperature. The commanding officer called the group together...

SOUND: Hubbub of voices, then subsiding quickly as the C. O. speaks.

LIEUTENANT

I just want to say a few words, fellows. Many of you still don't know why you're here. All you wanted was a job. Well, you have it, and it's a big one. It's more than a tree-planting job. Let me tell you what the President said, in proposing this Emergency Conservation Work. He said: "I propose to create a civilian conservation corps to be used in simple work, not interfering with normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects. This type of work is of definite practical value, not only through the prevention of great present financial loss, but also as a means of creating future national wealth." Those were the President's words. Fellows, in all sincerity, I say to you: You ought to be proud that you're in this great conservation movement.

MUSIC: Fading...



ANNOUNCER

Thus was the Civilian Conservation Corps born. Today, more than 300,000 enrollees are working to control erosion, preserve the forests, beautify and create parks, all working toward a more livable nation. And now, here is Ewing Jones, of the Soil Conservation Service at Dayton.

JONES

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_. Well, it should be evident by now that today is CCC day on the soil conservation program. We have quite a group here in the studio. There's Mr. James J. McEntee of Washington, D. C., Acting Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps. W. L. Baynes, Indiana state coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service. And also, here's a string band from the CCC camp at Wilmington, Ohio. I might explain that these boys worked up this orchestra in their leisure moments at night, as a sort of hobby. They call themselves the "Lazy River Boys". It's essentially a string band, but I wish all of you could see that set of drums one of the boys has made out of a washtub and a washboard. Their first number, "Wednesday Night Waltz."

LAZY RIVER BOYS

Musical number "Wednesday Night Waltz", two minutes.

JONES

Thank you, boys. Now, we feel quite honored in having Mr. J. J. McEntee with us. Mr. McEntee is acting director of the CCC, so he's in a position to give us the national viewpoint on the work being carried on in the fields and in the forests. Mr. McEntee.





McENTEE

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the conservation of our national resources before such a wide audience. In my opinion, the greatest thing the camps are doing is building men. Youths who enter the camps discouraged, green, often embittered through failure to find employment, are given a new outlook upon life. They leave the camps with healthy bodies, with heads up and capable of making their own way if jobs are available.

I wish there were more time to discuss the human phases of the CCC program. But as great as the CCC's contribution has been in human conservation, it has a counterpart in the tremendous amount of conservation work accomplished by the Corps in such fields as erosion control over large areas of farm lands, forest planting, forest improvement, forest and park protection, park development, flood control and wildlife preservation.

Conservation of natural resources has been advanced between 20 and 30 years during the past five years of CCC work. The Corps has done much to bring to the attention of the country the plight of many of our natural resources, which, if allowed to continue, would have brought more dire results. A nation cannot use its timber supply three times as rapidly as it replenishes it without reaching a day of want. It cannot deplete its watersheds continuously without being visited by the ravages of floods. We already have experienced that. A people cannot continue to plow its fields and lay them bare to wind and rain without suffering the consequences in dust storms and water erosion which sweep away the land's fertility and food-giving qualities.





McENTEE (Continued)

Soil conservation is certainly of paramount importance. The millions of acres of our agricultural land totally destroyed by gullies can never be brought back. The billions of tons of our most fertile soils taken by erosion to the sea can never be retrieved. We can only attempt to build up, painstakingly and through the years, what is left.

The Soil Conservation Service has tackled a big job--to help save some of the farm soils before farms and farm homes fall into the gullies. We have made only a beginning, but we are going ahead with the program. Today, 360 CCC camps, whose field work is under the supervision of the Soil Conservation Service, are carrying out demonstrations of proper land use.

Statistics do not, of course, show many results of the CCC. They but indicate such phases of work as the CCC has been called upon to do at times of emergency. Think back to the floods which descended upon New England and Pennsylvania two years ago. Or to the floods in the Ohio and Mississippi River basins in 1937. Go into any of the towns affected. Ask what part the CCC played. You'll get a better idea of the breadth of the work during these first five years.

In nearly every forest and park of the land you will see the marks of the CCC--protection against fire and disease; facilities for their greater use and enjoyment; graceful bands of contour strip cropping winding around the hillsides; terraces and farm ponds holding water on the farms; new forests in the making. Conservation in the United States is only just begun. I feel that the CCC has set a worthy example.



JONES

Thank you, Mr. McEntee, for this interesting report on what the Civilian Conservation Corps has done and is doing in the country as a whole. Now, let's boil that down to a single state.

Mr. W. L. Baynes, Soil Conservation Service state coordinator in Indiana, ought to be able to tell us what's going on in the Hoosier state. Bill, suppose you discuss it for us.

BAYNES

I'll be glad to, Ewing. First of all, I might point out that we are not attempting to control all the erosion in the country or in the state. What they are doing is demonstrating methods which farmers can use to control erosion.

JONES

In other words, the farmer provides the Service with a show window for the recommended erosion control program. In return, he secures assistance in planning and carrying out the control work on his own land.

BAYNES

That's it, exactly. There are eight such camps in Indiana. Take the Lafayette camp, as an example. It is working on 78 different farms in three counties. Each of these farms is considered as a complete erosion control demonstration. Control plans are made for every acre of each farm.



JONES

But you don't do the same type of work on each farm.

BAYNES

No, the program varies from farm to farm. The principles of erosion control remain the same, but the application of these principles is determined by such factors as slope, degree of erosion, the prevailing soil type, and the type of farming being carried on.

JONES

I see. Now, Bill, just one more question: how many farmers are cooperating with the CCC soil conservation camps in Indiana?

BAYNES

More than 800, Ewing, and you'll find them to be alert and progressive farmers who are looking out for the generations to come.

JONES

All right, thank you Bill Baynes. Now, let's close with another number by the Lazy River Boys. "The New River Train."

LAZY RIVER BOYS

"The New River Train", minute and one-half.

ANNOUNCER

Next week, the Ohio Valley Covers Up.

SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain.

ANNOUNCER

This is an educational presentation of the Nation's Station.



